Assistance for Indian migrant labourers

2245. SHRI S.K. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the inhuman conditions of Indian migrated labourers, who have been virtually lured and duped by unscrupulous recruitment agencies;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the actions being taken by Government to assist these ill-fated Indian migrant labourers living abroad?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) Complaints are received in this Ministry and Indian Missions regarding duping of workers by unscrupulous agencies by extorting large sums of money and sending them on visit visas or even transit visas. Complaints are also received regarding non-payment of salary,long work hours, lack of proper accommodation, food and medical facilities and ill-treatment in other forms.

In such cases, if registered recruitment agency is involved, action is taken under the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983, leading to suspension and cancellation of their registration certificates (RC). 27 RCs have been suspended/cancelled during 2007.

In respect of unregistered recruiting agents, the complaints are referred to concerned State Police Authorities/Protectors of Emigrants for investigation and appropriate action as per provisions of the law. 7 prosecution sanctions have been issued during 2007.

In respect of complaints against foreign employers, such foreign employer is placed in the Prior Approval Category. 338 Foreign employers have been placed under such category.

(c) Complaints received from the Indian workers are promptly taken up by the Indian Missions with the local sponsors and also the local Governments for redressal of the grievances of the workers. Whenever, workers approach the Indian Missions to return to India for various reasons, the Mission extend all possible help for their repatriation back to India. The Ministry monitors the problems through the Indian Missions abroad.

The Ministry has asked the Heads of Indian Missions for providing a 24/7 helpline service for women emigrants, organising quarterly open houses meetings for the benefit of Household Service Workers (HSWs) for hearing their problems and providing them counselling services and to ensure adequate publicity through the Indian community to create awareness amongst them.

Gulf countries from time to time declare amnesty for foreigners whose stay there is not regular either to leave the country without penalty or regularize their stay. Once amnesty is declared, the Indian Missions take up the matter with the local authorities for either regularizing the stay of the Indian workers or organising smooth issue of Emergency certificates for their deportation to India. This Ministry coordinates with the State Government authorities, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Civil Aviation to assist such workers.

Agreement for sending workers abroad

†2246. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government has made agreements with few countries till date during the last three years to send workers abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether provisions have been made in the agreements to provide wages and other facilities to the workers; and

(d) the details of the places where these workers are proposed to be sent?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) The Ministry has been signing bilateral MoUs on labour with countries where there are large number of Indian emigrant workers with a view to ensuring their protection and welfare abroad. In December 2006 the Government signed an MoU with the UAE and in April 2007 with Kuwait. In November 2007 an Additional Protocol with Qatar was signed to update the 1985 Agreement.

(c) The provisions for wages and other facilties are made in the labour contract signed between the employer and the worker. The bilateral agreements/MoUs reinforce of the contractual provisions; and

(d) Government does not send workers to any place. The workers are free to select their destination country, as per demand.

Problem of minimum wages in Gulf countries

2247. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indians working in Gulf countries are facing minimum wage problem;

(b) if so, the mechanism to help them; and

(c) the break up of men, women skilled/unskilled workers in each of the Gulf countries, country-wise?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) Minimum wages for wokers have not been prescribed by the local laws in the Gulf countries, and the wages are determined by the contracts between the employer and the worker. However for effective protection and welfare of women emigrants, Government of India has decided to ensure a minimum wages since they are in the most vulnerable category. The minimum wage are fixed by the Indian Missions concerned in the range of US$ 300-350 per months after taking into account the prevailing market wage in that country.

(c) As per reports received from the Indian Missions in the Gulf countries, the following is the approximate break up of men and women working there.

	Kuwait	Bahrain	Oman	S.Arabia	UAE	Qatar
Men	416500	216839	396500	1314847	1400000 (both men and women)	239000
Women	94661	17116	35500	35805		11000

No separate data on skilled/unskilled workers is available with the Missions. However, the Missions in Saudi Arabia and UAE have reported that as per rough estimates 80% and